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A Collection of Oriental MSS.—The Trustees of the British Museum have just acquired a most important collection of Oriental MSS., consisting of 138 volumes, more or less fragmentary, containing: 1. Arabic commentaries of the Bible, with the Hebrew text written by Karaite Jews; 2. Liturgies and hymns both of the Karaites and the Rabbinic Jews; 3. Karaite polemical treatises; 4. Grammatical, lexicographical, and philosophical treatises. Among the commentaries with the Hebrew text are some of the highest importance. They rank among the oldest Arabic MSS. hitherto known. Three are dated A. H. 348=A. D. 958, A. H. 359=A. D. 1004, and A. H. 437=A. D. 1045. The British Museum has hitherto possessed only one single MS. of this kind dated A. H. 398=A. D. 1007. Besides being of so early a date these MSS. show the cause of the law laid down in the Talmud "that the sacred Scriptures must not be written in any other but the square Hebrew characters." They demonstrate for the first time that the Jews were in the habit of writing the Scriptures in other characters. Another point of extreme interest to the Oriental student is the fact that though the commentaries are written in Arabic they contain large quotations from Anan's commentaries in Aramaic, thus proving beyond doubt that Anan, the founder of the Karaites, wrote in Aramaic, the language spoken in Palestine in the time of Christ. Biblical students will feel a debt of gratitude to the trustees for having secured this important collection for our national museum, which now possesses not only the largest number of, but the most valuable MSS. of the Old Testament. We have to add that the Jewish Persian MSS., the importance of which has been lately pointed out in these columns, have also been secured for the British Museum.—*London Times*.

First Hebrew Books.—The first Jewish book was printed in Mantua (Italy). It was the *Fur. Orach Chayim*, by R. Jacob ben Asher, which is dated 14 *Sivan*, (June 6th), 1476, to which was added one-third of *Yoreh De'ah*. The man who established this enterprise was Abraham Kunat (כונת) ben Solomon, a doctor of medicine. He and his wife, Estellina, learned typography and then established the office in Mantua, where he published five different Jewish works. (Zunz, in his *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*.) The oldest Hebrew publications in Germany come from Prague, where in 1513 Gershom Cohen ben Solomon established his typographical office, known up to the middle of the seventeenth century as the Gersonides printers' family (1513—1657.) The first Hebrew Bible was printed in 1488, in Soncino (Italy), a folio volume of 373 pages, no title page, by Joshua Solomon ben Israel Nathan, with the aid of the dyer, Abraham ben Chayim, of Pesaro.

The Biblical Hebrew.—The Biblical Hebrew is remarkable for the simplicity and regularity of its structure, and is well fitted for being employed in the composition of such narratives as are contained in the historic portions of the Old Testament. It is also admirably suited for devotional, aphoristic, poetical, and prophetic compositions. It appears already fully developed in the pages of the Pentateuch. In numerous instances its words present vivid representations of the objects to which they refer. Many of them suggest to the reader a host of interesting associations. It may be said with truth that no translation, in certain cases, could possibly convey to the reader the full significance of that which is expressed or suggested by the Hebrew terms. It contains words so forcible and